



DAFN Workgroup meeting

August 19, 2024

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions
Moving forward on priority topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 988
Workgroup Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Portal Page • Member Survey
Agenda for next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Standards for ADA and 504 compliance
Gratitude Share

988 Discussion

Elizabeth Emmett and Kate Shetty from DOH joined the group to present information and get feedback on the Department's effort to implement 988 suicide prevention and crisis intervention services in the state.

- 988 is a federal initiative to ensure that suicide prevention and crisis intervention services are available to those in emotional distress.
- In 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Act is passed. This Act made 988 the new, nationwide number for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis, including thoughts of suicide. In 2022, Washington State passed HB 1134 outlining how the 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention system would be implemented in Washington State.
- Washington State has set itself an ambitious goal to make its 988 efforts the most widespread and universally available in the country.

The 988 Lifeline exists to provide people in crisis with free, confidential, compassionate support. Contact the 988 Lifeline to get support for:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Mental health crises
- Substance use concerns
- Other emotional distress
- A loved one who may need crisis support

The 988 Lifeline is available 24/7/365 via call, text, or chat, as well as videophone for people who use American Sign Language (ASL).



- One unique part of Washington’s efforts is four dedicated lines for high-risk populations:
 - LGBTQ+ community
 - Spanish
 - Veterans
 - Native and Strong Lifeline (a dedicated line for Native American callers)

The goal of these specialized lines is to ensure that callers are connected to counselors who understand their lived experience and points of view.

- The system launched in 2022 nationally and in Washington State. It is active right now and is responding to about 10,000 calls a month.
- DOH and its contractor HCA are still working to identify what a fully funded and universally accessible system would look like. As part of this effort, they are hosting listening sessions and conversations like the one we are having today.
- They held one targeted conversation with those in the DAFN community last month but are still eager to get input.
- Crisis counselors go through a rigorous training that includes 18 training modules. There is a strong emphasis on DEI in this training, and the last step is for the counselor to go through mock calls to practice their responses before they provide live support.
- Liz E. provided a little data on usage for June:
 - Average answer speed for phone calls was 20 seconds.
 - 3,310 texts were responded to, with an average response time of 15 seconds.
 - 1,154 chats were responded to, with an average answer time of one second.
 - Data shows that a caller disconnects usually within the first 10 seconds. DOH is trying to reduce average response time to catch those callers that may disconnect.

Questions and Next Steps

- The presentation began with a short video explaining 988. It was noted that this video was not set up for screen readers and doing so would help to make it more accessible. Liz Emmett said she would look into making this happen.
- Several questions and comments related to the cultural relevance of services:
 - Workgroup members wanted to know what efforts were being made to ensure that the services were culturally accessible beyond the four target groups with dedicated lines. Liz E. responded that interpretation services were immediately available in more than 240 languages.
 - The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers ASL services for people in crisis. To access this:
 - Visit 988lifeline.org, select the “For Deaf & Hard of Hearing” link, select “ASL Now” on the next page.
 - You can also call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) from videophone to get crisis support with ASL.
 - David brought up the lack of recognition of the idea of deaf culture and wondered whether there would be counselors who had an understanding and experience with deaf culture.



- Dorian asked whether there was an option for callers to match with a counselor from their own cultural background or experience beyond the four specialized lines offered. Liz E. said she was not sure of the answer to this question but would find out.
- A number of workgroup members had questions about whether 988 calls would result in 911 or police being called, and the impact on the safety of callers of color. Liz E. offered the following reassurances to these concerns:
 - 988 counselors are trained to de-escalate situations and avoid the need for police intervention.
 - Police are only called if the counselor fears that the caller is a danger to themselves or others.
 - 98% of 988 calls are handled without involving emergency services.
- A question was asked about whether any of the services would be provided in person and/or if appointments could be made with 988 counselors.
 - Liz E. responded that this was not an option at this time but, as they continued exploring the next phase, these were being considered.

Changes to Compensation

Nilofer reminded everyone to make sure they fill out the new compensation form.

Discussion of the WA Portal's DAFN Page

Nilofer shared that a new landing page for the workgroup had been set up on the WA Portal. The page is here: <https://waportal.org/disabilities-and-access-functional-needs-workgroup>.

Questions and Next Steps

- Keshreeyaji noted that he would like to see a complete history of meeting notes and slides on the site. Nilofer stated that it might take her a bit to retrieve archival content but that we could make this change.
- David noted that the colors might make the site harder to read for someone who is color blind. Nilofer noted that the colors are partially set in WA Portal and Kauffman might not have the authority to make changes to them. Alyssa noted that she would be having a meeting with the DOH team members responsible for WA Portal and could bring this issue to their attention.
- We discussed whether to move forward with publishing the page but decided to wait until changes could be made.

Discussion of Member Survey

This item was tabled due to time, but Amy Roark noted that she had some concerns. Nilofer is going to reach out to her directly.

Items for the Next Meeting

Nilofer noted that the next meeting would include Javier Ruiz, DOH's new Civil Rights and Americans with Disabilities Act Program Manager.

Participants were asked to reflect ahead of time on the following questions:



- What questions do you have for them?
- Are there particular issues you want to be sure are included in the discussion?